



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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COMMISSIONERS

Ethridge A. King, Jr.
Polyxane S. Cobb
Peter Sheinfeld
Larry Ward

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tanya L. Ford

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Lesley Waxman

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Minutes of February 12, 2014

The meeting of the Cambridge Election Commission was called to order at 5:30 p.m. at the Election Commission offices, 51 Inman Street. Present were Commissioner Ethridge King, Chair, Commissioner Polyxane Cobb, Commissioner Peter Sheinfeld, Commissioner Larry Ward, Executive Director Tanya Ford, and Assistant Director Lesley Waxman.

I: MINUTES

The Minutes of January 29, 2014 were reviewed.

Motion: To approve the Minutes of January 29, 2014

Moved: Commissioner Sheinfeld

Seconded: Commissioner Cobb

The Motion passed: 3-0

II: REPORTS

Executive Director's Report [see attached]

The Executive Director reported that the contractor, Universal Wilde, which is printing and mailing the census forms, has fallen behind schedule. She met with them on January 9, 2014 when they were given a schedule and told that the Commission was available to respond to any questions or concerns the company might have. The mailing was due to be sent on February 1, 2014. There was no communication from the company after the January 9th meeting. Executive Director Ford called at least twice asking for updates and was told that everything was all right. Emails often went unanswered for more than 24 hours. After the date had passed and nothing had happened, she told them that she expects them to get the job done with all due speed and that if they cannot manage that they would be out of compliance with the contract and, if necessary, she would find a replacement.

The City Council passed a resolution [0-6] asking the Legal Department and the Election Commission to report what would be involved both legally and procedurally to change the transfer method in municipal elections from the presently used Cincinnati Method to a Fractional Transfer Method.

The Commission discussed the matter at some length and expressed concern that this is a complex issue which will require some time to respond to fully. The Legal Department needs to assess whether it would be necessary to change the charter. It is not known whether any other community in the United States has used the Fractional Transfer Method since Cambridge first began using Proportional Representation. If one can be found, the law presently give the Election Commission authority to make a change with a simple policy vote. Otherwise, a fundamental change has to be made to the charter.

Presently a Cambridge voter's ballot counts for one of the candidates chosen on their ballot. It may be their number 1 vote or their number 4 vote, but that candidate receives a full vote from the voter. In the Fractional

Transfer Method, a candidate on the ballot may receive less than 1 whole vote from the voter. Several candidates can receive fractions of that vote with the fractions adding up to 1 vote. The Legal Department needs to determine whether this would be consistent with the Supreme Court ruling of one person, one vote.

A further question is whether software currently in use can absorb the change. Our consultant, Caleb Kleppner of TrueBallot, feels that it probably would be no problem and that the present memory cards for the AccuVote scanners could be easily programmed to accommodate the Fractional Transfer Method.

The Secretary of State's office has approved new scanners for the Commonwealth. The machines in Cambridge are beginning to show wear. If Cambridge purchases the new machines, they will use different memory cards and it will be necessary to determine whether the Fractional Transfer Method can be programmed into the newer cards. If not, it may be necessary to retain the old AccuVote machines for municipal elections while using newer ones for other elections. That presents a storage problem in addition to the difficulty of maintaining the older machines.

The Executive Director will transmit the issues raised in the discussion of the Commissioners to the City Manager.

Assistant Director's Report [see attached]

The Assistant Director reported that three School Committee candidates have yet properly to file their year-end finance reports which were due on January 21, 2014. Two, John Holland and Elechi Kadete, have filed reports which contained errors. They have been advised how to correct the errors. One, Richard Harding, Jr., has neither responded to the a letter of January 27, 2014 or an additional voicemail left on February 7, 2014. The Office of Political and Campaign Finance [OPCF] advised the Commission that a registered letter, return receipt requested, be sent to the delinquent candidate and that if a report was not filed in a timely manner by ten days after the date on the receipt, the candidate should be reported to the OPCF. The fine is \$25.00 a day until the report has been filed.

Commissioner Reports

There were no Commissioners' reports.

III: ACTION AGENDA

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

The next meeting of the Board of Election Commissioners was set for Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. at Commission Offices, 51 Inman Street.

Motion: To adjourn at 6:45 p.m.

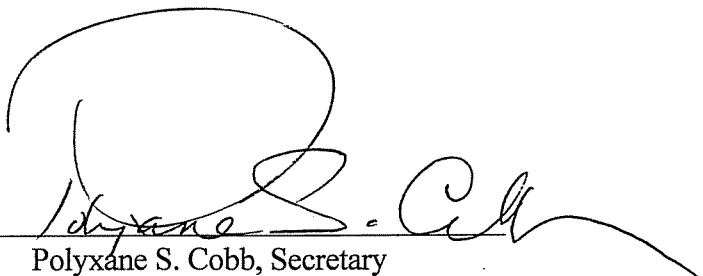
Moved: Commissioner King

Seconded: Commissioner Ward

The Motion passed: 4-0

A True Record

Attested by:


Polyxane S. Cobb, Secretary